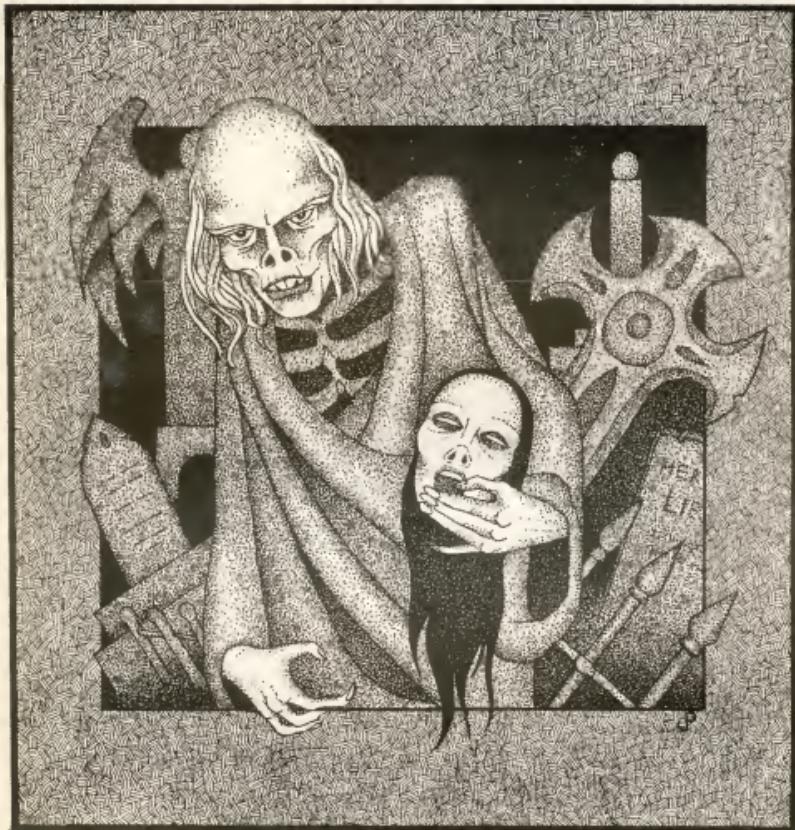


Dark Horizons • 7



DARK HORIZONS

THE JOURNAL OF "THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY" : issue 7 : December 1973

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Members receive this magazine four times a year, a bulletin monthly, a fanzine library news letter quarterly; they are also entitled to use both the book and fanzine libraries, enter stories into the writers critical circle and vote annually in The August Derleth Fantasy Award.



EDITED BY ADRIAN COLE AND DAVID A. SUTTON

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Dark Horizons: All material herein is Copyright (C) 1973 to the respective authors. Articles, Reviews, Stories and Artwork are always welcome for possible inclusion, and should whenever possible be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please note the new address to send contributions and letters of comment:-

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Artwork: Front Cover by JIM PITTS ("Ghoul").
Back Cover by STEVE JONES.



'SO IT GOES...'

THE EDITORIAL

BY DAVID A. SUTTON

Dark Horizons has a new editor..?

So it goes.

The title of my editorial is the catch-phrase of Kurt Vonnegut's bitterly-humorous *Slaughterhouse Five*, a phrase loaded with all the cynicism and measured indifference that Vonnegut is able to muster with his brilliant wit. If Kilgore Trout (one of the author's characters - an abysmal science-fiction writer!) was a member of the BFS, this news about the journal would be greeted with "so it goes" no doubt.

I hope the members, however, are concerned and interested in the society journal.

But the more perceptive readers will have noticed, I am sure (besides the litho printing) that two editors are credited on the previous page: two. An explanation is warranted. I won't go into the in's and out's of the better printing for DH, because I'm sure it's something we've all wanted for some time, and it's going to improve the magazine's readability, it's going to be a more worthwhile publication within the BFS, and it's going (I hope) to encourage you writer's and artist's to contribute.

Contribute.

But as I was saying about the double billing on page one. Adrian Cole, as most of you know, took over DH last year and gave us one pretty acceptable issue in a duplicated format. (The response to that issue is printed herewith - see the letters column). Adrian lent a fresh approach to DH and it is much to our chagrin that due to reasons of health he has had to abandon what could have been a long and successful run under his helm.

The reason two editors are listed here is because while Adrian had already selected the material for the proposed seventh issue, I did the layout and made the final decisions on what to use, and of course, I wrote the editorial. I hastily apologise here to those members who like to see plenty of artwork in a magazine - but this was something unavoidable with issue 7, and I hope you will all bear with me until DH is operating smoothly once more.

I would like to go on and say here that I am not DH's new and official editor. I did in fact take on issue 7 to ensure the members do receive what they have paid for. (And I do have some small editing experience with my own fanzine, Shadow). While the committee waited hopefully for a new editor to emerge from the rank and file, there would, under normal circumstances, have been no DH7; and members having paid their subscriptions are entitled to their money's worth. As I write this editorial the cogs are beginning to grind to find us a new editor, and we may have one by the time this issue hits your doormat. Meanwhile, members' shouldn't despair, for DH will be forthcoming and will be of a high standard. First, there's this copy you hold in your hand. Then issue 8 will be edited by Darroll Pardoe (and he may take on the job more permanently after that), which should be out in March - very shortly anyway. Therefore, contributions are required and will be welcomed, and should be mailed to Darroll, whose address will be found on page one. Comments on this particular issue can also be sent to him, and please do send in your thoughts.

Now on to a few notes on the contents of DH7. The Jim Pitts cover illustration was commissioned by me at very short notice, and Jim was very obliging. And in fact, I would like to thank Jim here, on behalf of the committee, for his stalwart work for the BFS - his previous artwork used for advertising and display material has gained the society new members, and plenty of them. His artwork has always been a firm favorite with fantasy fans and I'm very pleased to have his work distinguish the first litho DH. Steve Jones, someone I've only just recently been aware of as a fantasy illustrator, takes the back cover slot with a sword-wielding hero. Litho printing does of course mean artists can get the best reproduction possible in the amateur magazine - and so hopefully you artists will be eager to contribute.

Over to the written contents. Ramsey Campbell's Derleth As I Knew Him consists of extracts from letters from Derleth to Ramsey, annotated by the latter. August Derleth, as many members will already know, founded Arkham House publishers in the USA in 1939, primarily to bring into hardcover print the work of H. P. Lovecraft, whose stories had then only been widely seen by the readers of the pulp magazine, Weird Tales. But Arkham House grew and grew - into the best speciality publishing house for fantasy and supernatural fiction in the world. Derleth was the man who kept Arkham House going for 30-odd years, and during that time brought between its fine bindings the work of many well-known, and some less well known, authors in the genre. One of those authors was Ramsey Campbell, who has published two volumes of short stories under the AH imprint, The Inhabitant of the Lake (1964) and Demons By Daylight (1973). Naturally enough, Derleth corresponded with Ramsey, as he must have done to many, many fellow writers and editors, right up until his death in 1971. Herewith is a small insight into a man who became a giant in the fantasy field, revealed through his letters; part one is featured herewith - the conclusion to the article will be in DH8.

Ramsey also contributes Layouts, a new informal comics column, which will appear each issue. A number of our members are comics fans, and as it is the policy of the BFS to deal with all aspects of the fantasy genre, I am sure a permanent column of this nature will be welcomed by those fans. For the rest of us, there's the Review section, which covers films, books and music - something I hope can be attained in each successive issue. I think there should always be a number of good quality reviews - something I've always felt to be important. If we can't comment coherently on what's being published in our own genre, then we have no right to publish fanzines at all. I firmly believe in this. Where there is no professional periodical devoted to fantasy, it is up to the amateur journals to show us that intelligent review and criticism of the books, films and so on, can be made.

Retrospectator is the letters column, with views and comments on DH6. Adrian Cole did the annotations and the layout for this, and I have left this almost unchanged. Whether you prefer a straightforward letters column or the chatty, informal style as used here is for you to comment on. Finally, two short stories appear in this number, The Spell of Lancy by Glen Symonds, a poet and short story writer from Norfolk, who tells me he has just made his first story sale to the American magazine Whispers. The other tale, Do Not Disturb is by fan writer and artist, David Lloyd, and is a cautionary horror tale.

I can't emphasize too much the need for contributions of quality from all sectors - review, art, articles, fiction etc. With the litho printing DH must put on a more professional air, both for the members' sakes as well as for the dignity of the BFS. The magazine is in the front line as it were, and judgement on the society will be taken on the quality of its journal. This depends on those members who do occasionally lend their talents to writing and drawing for fanzines. We obviously can't pay for material used, except in the usual manner of the complimentary copy. The editor will do his bit within the scope of the material to hand, and the litho printing does offer writers and artists reasonably good reproduction - so come on all you potential contributors! With four issues a year we need to receive a goodly load of goodies from which to choose...

--- ooOoo ---

Finally, I would like to mention a couple of items of pressing importance now that the BFS year draws to a close. By the end of February next, through the society bulletin, we shall be asking for votes from the members for both the election of officers and for the August Derleth Fantasy Award. Before we can elect new officers to the BFS committee we need nominations for the various posts. Are you interested in working on the committee? If so, please see recent issues of the bulletin, which give full details concerning this most important aspect of society business. Posts available for nomination are:- 'President', 'Vice-President', 'Secretary', 'Treasurer', 'Publicity Officer', two non-defined 'Committee Members', 'Magazine Editor' and 'Bulletin Editor'.

Derleth As I Knew Him

BY RAMSEY CAMPBELL

19.8.61 "Dear Mr Campbell:

All thanks for your letter of the 16th. I should say at the outset that we had better see your pastiches of Lovecraft Mythos stories because a) the Lovecraft material is copyrighted and so protected and b) the approval of Arkham House is necessary before any copyrighted material can be released for publication. This is a necessary provision, of course, because if we did not enforce it scores of cheap imitations would flood the market, reflecting unfavourably on Lovecraft and his work."

That was how it began. I was fifteen and eager as a puppy. I was also more than a little terrified of having written to a genuine professional writer, and one who had contributed to the legendary *Weird Tales* at that. These attitudes combined to make me shower Derleth with questions on every possible subject in the weird fiction field and wait panting for the answers. I don't know how he put up with me. That he did so is a considerable tribute to him.

26.8.61 "No, of course I don't have the time to tell you the contents of our projected books." Let's go on before his patience wears thin. Here he is, giving the game away about the genesis of the Severn Valley setting of some of my stories:

6.10.61 "What I suggest you do is establish a setting in a coastal area of England and create your own British milieu. This would not appreciably change your stories, but it would give them a much needed new setting and would not, in the reader's mind, invite a direct comparison with Lovecraft, for in such a comparison they would not show up as well as if you had your own setting and place-names for the tales."

And here he is putting the boot in THE TOMB-HERD (later to become THE CHURCH IN THE HIGH STREET):

18.10.61 "On p. 15 here, I think the telegram very bad, almost amusingly bad.

Certainly it doesn't strike the note you want. It is much too definite, for one thing, and Lovecraft by and large avoided being too definite in descriptions of his malignant entities. Redo this - and bear in mind that nobody wd. write 'what is this thing that flops unspeakably down the passage' etc. Nonsense! This only makes the story ridiculous. If a man is composing a wire and hears something come, he might scowl, 'Oh, God - it's coming!' or something of that sort, but hardly the silly lines you put down here, which, instead of inspiring with horror, only fill with jeering laughter."

Well, that's the sort of approach that can make or break a writer. It made me, and at Derleth's death a good deal of forthrightness went out of the editing of weird fiction. I suppose he had a special relationship with the young me - paternal, if you like. Soon he began to take me by the hand without my asking. Thus, for example:

25.10.61 "Don't be trapped - I mean, don't depend on writing alone to make you a living. I did, and while I managed to fare well by leaning on my parents for ten years, I don't recommend it; when you're out of school get yourself a decent, not too harrowing job, and write as much as possible."

And again, when I told him I was planning to attend a science-fiction convention:

20.11.61 "Fans, I find, are the biggest time-wasters in the business, however gratifying some of their adulation may be for the time being; you are

apt to find sycophants and adulation something for which you pay a high price in time, and the most valuable thing you have to use is time, not money."

I attended it anyway, of course. My father wasn't going to choose my friends for me. He didn't want me to give my work to fanzines, either, in case it fell by accident into the public domain. 4.12.61 "If you want that to happen, son, you are just simply not very bright."

Indeed (to step out of chronology for a moment) he went further:

21.5.62 "Seriously now, if you have any serious intentions of becoming a writer, it is high time you stopped playing around with fanzines. Fanzine contributions are made up chiefly of two classes - authors not good enough to get into professional print, and authors of some reputations who have been suckered into contributing gratis. Very few fanzine authors have ever subsequently appeared between hard covers. I can't tell you not to appear in fanzines, but to tell the truth, I will give a long hard look at your book ms. if its contents have been made available to the fans free of charge. The book editor's point of view is simply this: why shd. I pay for the privilege of publishing this if the author can give it away to a fanzine? This is bound to be my own attitude also."

Whether this related to some unpleasant experience of his own I don't know. I muttered and grumbled over the letter, but most of the good sense came through. After all, I had to give him credit for experience, which placed our relationship above the reality (and for that matter, the psychology) of much blood paternalism. Besides, by then he had displayed a professional's objectivity about his own work:

15.1.62 "And in these books (a list of some of his non-fantasy work) you have the best of my work, I think, beyond question. Not quite 10% of my total output - but then, as writing goes, that is a good enough average."

By this time "Dear Mr Campbell" had become "Dear JRC". I worried about giving offence, then wrote "Dear AWD" (if he didn't mind, I hurriedly added). I was still in awe of him. My awe turned to ire when he replied to my manuscript of THE CHURCH IN THE HIGH STREET, partly as follows:

7.2.62 "I have now read THE TOMB-HERD, and while I am not altogether satisfied with it, I believe I can use the story... subject to certain conditions: 1) that the title be altered to THE CHURCH IN THE HIGH STREET; 2) that I be given a free editorial hand to alter and delete as I see fit. For instance, the initial paragraph should go. Following the quotation from Alhazred, the story should begin with: 'If I had not been the victim of circumstances, I know that I would never have gone to ancient Temp hill.' - 'rotting, ancient' is a bit too much at this juncture. I want, in short, to make the story more direct, in some places less clear, in some places more, and I want to guard against overwriting, of which there is a bit in this ms."

What! My carefully revised second draft, not satisfactory? After I'd even drawn a sketch-map of Temp hill, in imitation of Lovecraft? But what good sense temporarily failed to achieve, a \$50.00 carrot managed. Yes, I wrote back, I accept, clawing soles with nails as I did so. The original manuscript isn't handy, and so I can't inflict that first blue-pencilled paragraph on you to demonstrate how right he was.

Later in the month he was (more gently) right again:

27.2.62 "Very well. We'll leave it J. Ramsey Campbell. When I was your age I thought the initial v. important; my byline was August W. Derleth. When I grew up I realised that it was in an author's interest to have as short a by-line as possible - readers remembered it better - and dropped the W. How absurd it was!"

Ah, but I knew better, then. He'd just returned from hospital after the first of his operations. I'm sure I told him to get well soon, but I suspect that more of my letter was devoted to the indispensability of my initial. If only. Still, I

doubt he had time to reflect on my lack of feeling; he was busy answering his accumulated letters, 250 of them. 50 was an average day's mail, he told me. A minor matter in Derleth's eyes, on the evidence: on 23 April he wrote: "I've turned out 200,000 words since 1/1/62." You have to earn that sort of casualness. You could accuse him sometimes of being too casual, though, as I found when I mentioned NEW MAPS OF HELL:

26.7.62 "Yes, I know about Kingsley Amis. He is strictly an amateur, though, acting like a pro. SF is not really his field; I should think it a carry-over or hold-over from childhood, and the effort to deal seriously with sf as a literary form I find only sadly amusing. It belongs to the area of pure entertainment exactly as do our other fantasy forms, love romances, western stories and detective fiction, and any other assertion can only be greeted with amusement."

But on the other hand his criticism always had an edge. I was coming to love films at the time, and our letters often consisted largely of exchanged opinions. Sometimes he could cut straight through to the basic flaw, and it seems a pity (though of course he hadn't the time) that he didn't take up reviewing:

3.1.63 "I also saw Dassin's PHAEDRA, which I thought a profound bore, really a bore. I was utterly, but utterly unconvinced by it - I have an eye for both male & female beauty (if you can apply beauty to the male, and I think you can), and to postulate that a fullbloodied woman like Mercouri would turn her back on a real man like Raf Vallone for a spindly kid like Tony Perkins is about as credible as asking us to believe that Queen Elizabeth would go gaga over Hitler."

And as his letters became friendlier his criticism of his own work seemed to sharpen:

18.1.63 "I think, out of close to 5,000 published pieces, I believe only about 2 to represent the best I could have done with more time and convenience. One is a short story later dubbed in as the final chapter of EVENING IN SPRING; the other a novella titled ANY DAY NOW, included in COUNTRY GROWTH. Apart from its formlessness at this stage, I am also reasonably well pleased with WALDEN WEST."

A pity, I think parenthetically, that nobody ever filmed EVENING IN SPRING - Bogdanovitch, perhaps. Did Derleth ever resent the amount of time he had to spend at the typewriter? Yes, but far less than most of us would. Writing THE SHADOW IN THE GLASS, which he initially regarded as a challenge, became "like pulling teeth". The one expression of pure resentment I can find relates to the fact that, having gone some way towards emulating Thoreau, he was unable to enjoy even that:

17.4.63 "All my deadlines are now met, and I am planning - apart from AH, correspondence and proofs - & of course my columns - and I'm doing some of them ahead now - to vegetate and enjoy the spring, which has come in far too warm - 77° today - when 57° would be about right; this has the unhappy effect of telescoping the spring - the vistas of unfurling leaves, opening flowers, etc., esp. the lovely soft green of the early spring landscape - are telescoped; they last 3 to 5 days instead of two weeks or more, all of which I find maddeningly annoying, since I sat through a bitter winter for the express purpose of enjoying the spring, and all - or most - of its most beautiful aspects will have rushed past before I've had full opportunity to enjoy the season."

Soon after came the letter for which I had searched in the mail each morning: his recation to the final draft of THE INHABITANT OF THE LAKE. Here's a further sample of his criticism:

25.7.63 "As a general criticism, I have to point out that your endings tend to fall down. THE PLAIN OF SOUND, for instance, which is a good, interesting story, comes up with a weak ending. 'I saw what it took from its victims,' as you have it, is a let-down; it is simply not enough, at least for this old pro; we cannot imagine that 'it' took anything sufficiently horrible to drive Tony insane.

There are others among the tales with endings that are weaker than the stories; the stories on the whole are strong and move along well, but they build up to relatively poor climaxes. It is very much like the standard cartoon of somebody lighting a giant firecracker with all the bustle and preparation attendant upon making sure everyone is out of the way, only to have the thing explode with a feeble pop."

They don't edit like that any more. Well, some do, but too few. Later in the year his forthrightness increases:

12.11.63 "--'s tragedy is that he is a heavy drinker and chronic smoker. I have little patience with either. I never smoked, I never drank to excess, and my entire feeling about people who do is that they're simply weaklings."

And I'm inclined to think that this forthrightness enabled him to keep his head during the return of his infirmities:

5.12.63 "It (the prostate) is in my case inflamed, spilling blood into the urine, and, since this is not in itself painful, it indicates trouble in this area; further, since all the ducts up the dong lead through it, orgasm during this period is rather touchy - at the moment I've not had an orgasm for about a week and brother! I've got hot rocks, as we say over here in America, to such an extent that I might as well go ahead and have the orgasm anyway because it won't hurt any more than the repression does!"

Early in the following year he justified Arkham House's bias towards fantasy. Some of his points still hold true, sadly.

1.1.64 "Fantasy has a steadier market (and a less crowded one) than sf fantasy, which has too much bilge in it. The sf people seldom buy non-sf fantasy, whereas the fantasy devotees who buy our books buy everything in which they are interested, which includes sf if it's good. The sf people, the fans, that is, are in general a narrower lot."

One point about his weird fiction still surprises me on rereading:

6.2.64 "I sat down the other day to write THE SHADOW IN THE ATTIC after one of Lovecraft's notes in the Commonplace Book, and actually couldn't bring myself to make it a Cthulhu tale - I've reached saturation point, I suspect; so I settled for witchcraft."

Later he was to describe this story as reading "Like HPL tongue-in-cheek". Why bother writing at all on that basis? you may complain. Well, consider: on 4 March 1964 Derleth's bank balance stood at \$6,000, while Arkham House's printing costs for the year would be \$21,000. THE SHADOW IN THE ATTIC brought Arkham House books a little nearer your bookshelf, and it was to Derleth's credit that he could be objective about this and still find the urge to write.

Let's take Derleth out of the air-mail letter for a moment and into his column, WISCONSIN DIARY, for the Madison *Times*. This passage seems amusing enough to quote, and typical enough of what he had to suffer:

13.6.64 "My day was brightened by the receipt of another of those amusing anonymous poison pen letters, this one bearing the stigma of a writer whom I have previously urged to consult a good psychiatrist. A propos my column: 'Perhaps in your immediate vicinity you could find any number of average ten-year-old children who could think of subjects to write about, which would be more interesting than your column. As for your attendance at Mass a few Sundays ago, being next to two good looking young ladies, well that shows clearly what your mind is filled with. I think you feel ashamed - if you have any shame' (I haven't) 'to mention that it added and broadened your attendance. I take my missal and my rosary to church with me, but the Sundays you are in church I am so busy watching you I don't have the time to use them. I notice you only use your notebook and write in it. As for the rest of your column, it's silly to be in the marshes all the time, or perhaps you didn't tell us all? Ahem...' I enjoyed the writer's spleenetic envy, and particularly his attention, though I thought it somewhat

The * **SPELL** * of LANKYA

A SHORT STORY

BY GLEN SYMONDS

It was beyond doubt that Lankya was the most powerful magician in the realm, in fact the old man never tired of spreading the fact far and wide, spouting endlessly through his wild, long, grey beard. He dressed as a magician is supposed to dress, in flowing robes; he acted like a magician is supposed to act; and, as any magician worth his salt lives in a castle, Lankya lived in one, the largest in the land, of course.

Calimin, on the other hand, was a magician of a much lower order; Lankya never tired of telling him that too. Blighting crops, causing cows to dry up, Calimin could do that all right; but for anything requiring more skill... well, you had to look elsewhere. A small character, resembling a humanoid rat, he stood with Lankya in the latter's magical chamber.

"As I see it, Calimin," said Lankya, mixing together various ingredients - better left unmentioned - in a large bowl, "you need a spell to make an enemy wither and die?"

"That is so," squeaked Calimin. "My worst enemy. A man who would harm me without thought."

"I can think of thousands." Lankya's laughter boomed around the high, grey stone walls of the chamber.

"Be that as it may," grinned Calimin, showing remarkably yellow, rodent-like teeth, "it must be one hundred percent certain of working, otherwise all the Hell hounds of the nether regions will be howling at my heels."

The grey beard quivered in sudden rage, the black eyes blazed with ill-concealed fury. "What! You dare to suggest that a spell wrought by Lankya would fail to work? Be careful, puny one."

"I beg forgiveness, Lord Lankya, I meant to cast no aspersions on your greatness."

"I should think not, slimy, four-foot toad..."

Lankya carried on mixing the ingredients of the spell. Baffled as he was, a smile was upon his parchment-dry lips; he took a pride in his creations and worked with gusto. It was in some ways the same kind of pride a master chef would feel. The pale green brew in the earthenware bowl bubbled of its own accord.

The great magician drew himself to his full height, magnificent in his red robe.

"You see the strength of the brew, sly one? A heady mixture, equal to any wine of the Witch Queen Anumi. A liquid that will serve your needs well, fear not."

"I trust so," Calimin plucked a thread that held a patch in his tattered clothes.

"You rat-faced son of a whore!" roared Lankya angrily. "Cease to denigrate my work, or I will have your insides in a bottle before me!"

"Forgive me once again, great one," begged rat-face, "it was spoken without thought."

"As you possess no brain, that is quite understandable."

The master magician began stirring the sickening mess, his anger melting away again. "You realise my services will not be cheap, weakling. I shall require - silver. Perhaps as much as six hundred quandros."

Calimin smiled hurriedly - which was enough to turn the strongest of stomachs - so as not to insult Lankya again. "Fear not, O high one, I have been saving what coins I could. Why, only last week I robbed three corpses, stealing the silver that closed their eyes. One crone also wore a gold ring; I had to detach the finger with my dagger of course, but Delial the merchant gave me twelve quandros

for it."

"Huh! It was probably worth a hundred. Why do you wish harm upon your enemy, sewer-rat? How has he belittled you? If indeed that is possible..."

Calimin scowled and his rodent eyes twinkled for a second or two, then he said carefully: "Many years ago I entangled a wench by magic, wishing to experience her charms at my leisure. She was fair, not more than eighteen years, and better for passing the time than wine-drinking. But before I could take my pleasure, my enemy stole her from me."

"Which shows just how weak your puny powers really are, filth of the night."

"Indeed, great one... your wisdom is ageless."

"Is that all he has done to you?"

"No, dark lord. That was only the beginning. He has victimised me time and time again."

"Well, now," Lankya grinned slowly, "I will show you what the powers of a real magician can do to the enemy you think so strong."

The great magician lifted up the bowl in his ancient, bejewelled hands, raising it to chest height. Calimin saw the age-old runes carved around the bowl, whose meaning, as an initiate of the lower orders, he could only guess at. Lankya muttered an incantation known only to himself and the Seven Lords of the Mist, and hurled the contents into the fire that burned in the centre of the chamber.

There was a shattering crash - like, yet unlike, thunder - far more terrible than any natural storm. Calimin's features twisted into a mask of animal fear, then slowly relaxed into their usual ugliness.

Yellow smoke was rising from the fire and whirling into a cloud, like a twisting, formless animal.

"Now you shall see," Lankya grinned broadly, staring at the cloud, "go on your way, spell of mine, attack the rat-one's worst enemy."

The cloud whirled around and began moving... towards Lankya.

Calimin was smiling. "Yes, indeed. My worst enemy..." He turned his smug gaze on Lankya. "You will recall, great one, that it was you who stole the girl from me so long ago." He was growing in confidence by the second. "You are my worst enemy, great magician."

The yellow, writhing cloud was racing towards Lankya, who to Calimin's surprise still maintained his stance and still continued to smile.

"I think, puny one, that you have been premature with your craftiness. It will be good to be free of you."

He held one hand up, index finger pointing. The mist raced toward the magician's finger like filings drawn towards a magnet. Next Lankya whirled his arm around his head, the yellow vapour following... then it began racing back towards the rat-faced one.

"You see, inmate of the sewers, I believe you are your worst enemy." Calimin's smile faded and was quickly replaced by a look of horror - he had time for one scream before the mist engulfed him. Through the mist the laughing Lankya could see the rodent features cracking and withering, falling away in rotting pieces; then the rat-one collapsed.

The great magician strode forward and snatched the purse from Calimin's belt, undid the string and tilted it over his outstretched palm; a few silver coins fell out. The smile left his face as he snarled, "The son of a twice-accursed whore!"

There were no more than six coins in his hand.

"Filth of the gutter! Slime of the sewer! Even in death he insults me. Even in the dark realms he cannot be trusted!"

Lankya bellowed in anger, hurling the purse and its contents from him, the coins clattering against the farthest wall. The magician had abandoned himself to rage and was ruled now by his temper. Lankya, greatest and most accomplished of all the magicians, failed to see that he had wandered... into the yellow mist...

Reviews

1.

FILMS

THEATRE OF BLOOD (Anglo-American Production, Starring Vincent Price).
Reviewer: ADRIAN COLE.

Vincent Price, ageing virtuoso of cinema horror, has seldom if ever before been surrounded by such a cast of stars as in this gory, gruesome, grisly festival of ghoulish gymnastics; one could almost see the film as his Testimonial, a tribute to his own peculiar talents. And Price rises to the awesome occasion to stride masterfully and literally mercilessly through all his fellows to emerge as the lord of life and death in much the same way as he did in the two superb Phibes epics. This time, however, the string of murders are more unpleasant, nastier, and in places a lot sicker than before, but are somewhat toned down by the way the film is played - strictly for laughs. And there are plenty. But if you haven't seen it, don't forget to take your brown paper bags with you.

Price plays the part of Edward Lionheart, a Shakespearian actor under the misguided conception that he is the greatest actor the world has ever known. Unfortunately the leading circle of London critics see him in something more akin to the worst actor in the history of the stage and their reviews of his work (which he collects fastidiously) are often scathing and always unfavourable. The ultimate blight upon Lionheart's self-styled number-one ranking comes when the circle fail to award him their annual statuette and give it to a younger man. Lionheart is so overcome that he flings himself into the Thames, and as his body is never found he is presumed dead. A silly thing to have presumed as it turns out.

Now comes the tide of nausea. Firstly, one of the critics, played by Michael Horden, receives a phone call from the police, saying that there are a number of squatters and tramps on some of his property that is due for redevelopment - Horden being on the committee for the said scheme. Ignoring his wife's pleas, he drives down to the slum area and tries to shift the filthy collection of reprobates, but they all turn on him and carve him up. Why are the two policemen watching? Well, it's good old Vince and friend, quoting, "oh thou bleeding piece of earth..." from Julius Caesar as Horden dies. Edward Lionheart is back with a vengeance - Shakespearian deaths for all.

Dennis Price is lured to an old theatre which he is told is going to be restored. Being interested in these types of building he goes in, only to be confronted by Lionheart dressed as Achilles. The latter reads to Price (his name being Hector Snipe) some of the cheerless things he said about his (Lionheart's) performance as Achilles, then drives a spear through his chest. Later, at a gathering of critics after the burial of Horden, they are growing impatient about Snipe's lateness. But his corpse does turn up, tied to the tail of a galloping horse, a la Hector in "Troilus and Cressida".

Next for the chop, quite literally, is Arthur Lowe. A mysterious trunk has appeared in his wife's bedroom, and it's far too heavy to lift, of course. As Lowe and his wife sleep that night, out of the trunk comes Lionheart and his daughter (Diana Rigg) and Lionheart gives both Lowe and his wife a shot with a hypodermic. Lionheart then proceeds to cheerfully sever Lowe's head and there's plenty of blood to go around. Lowe's wife wakes up in the morning and prods her still sleeping husband, whose head very realistically rolls onto the floor and practically bumps up against the camera lens. Shades of "Cymbeline".

By now the police - head man Milo O'Shea and stooge Eric Sykes have figured out that someone is out to bump off all the critics... very astute stuff. President, Ian Hendry finds out who it is when he goes for a fencing lesson. Who should be lurking behind the face-guard but Lionheart, sprouting lines from the fight scene in "Romeo and Juliet". An amazing film sequence follows as the two

fight with bared blades, Lionheart gradually chopping up Hendry's shirt front and chest, and interesting use is made of a trampoline. Lionheart spares his victim, but tells him he can kill him whenever he chooses.

Despite warnings from the police that everyone must stay together, Harry Andrews gets careless. He has an eye for a pretty girl, and Diana Rigg pops up and tells him that she was hoping to be auditioned by the now deceased Lowe and of how dreadfully disappointed she is. Andrews drools suitably and follows her to the aforementioned, foreboding old theatre. A play is in progress and Andrews is given a script. Diana Rigg (Edwina) tells him it's 'live theatre' and that the play in progress, "Merchant of Venice" has been altered slightly, with "one big cut". Andrews is to play Antonio, who as you will remember, is the guy who owes rotten old Shylock a pound of flesh. Enter Price as Shylock (and very good he is too, complete with kosher accent) who carves out Andrews' heart.

This is sent to Ian Hendry and his pals. Next to go is Robert Coote who is the critic with an over-fondness for wines and wine-tasting ceremonies. Police escort him to a wine-tasting evening and down into the huge cellars he comes face to face with... yes, you're on the ball, Lionheart, this time as the notorious Richard Crookback, "Richard III". He recites some adverse remarks from one of Coote's reviews before having him drowned in a fat butt of malmsey wine. Perhaps the most tasteful of the murders.

And for a more sympathetic method of disposal - enter Jack Hawkins, in what must be one of the master's last roles, sad to say. He has a rather desirable wife Diana Dors, if you go in for the giant jumbo sized wenches, and he is apt to get very jealous and suspicious of her. So Edwina, disguised as a hippy, phones him and tells him to go home early and he'll see some naughty goings on. It's lively Lionheart again, this time as a masseur. He has been giving Diana Dors a thorough going-over once a week, and when Jack Hawkins sees him arrive, he thinks the wrong thing. And when he hears the bed creaking and the ecstatic groans of his wife as Lionheart (disguised, by the way, as a Frenchman) administers massage, he loses control, bursts in, so mad he ignores Lionheart, leaps on his wife and suffocates her with a pillow... as did Othello do for Desdemona. Hawkins is thus spared a nasty death (for reasons which will be fairly obvious and quite justified) but as a critic he's finished. Breath-taking stuff.

Nearly done for them all now. Only one lady critic - Coral Browne, who's in for a real shock. She is vain enough to want her weekly hair-do by her Mayfair expert, so, complete with escort, she pays a late visit. Edwina in hippy guise again, tells her there is a new man in, but he's done all the royal heads. This time Lionheart becomes a barber, and just to discourage the burly policeman from peeping at what he's doing, he puts on his Larry Grayson puff act... another amusing piece of hamming up by our Vince. As Coral Browne is having her rollers fitted, Lionheart discusses "Henry IV" and in particular Joan of Arc who was fried at the stake. He then switches on full power and the lady beneath the drier suffers an acute attack of electrocution, after which we get a quick flash of hairless, skinless, fried face.

And for the main course, and what must be the worst aperitif ever to having an after-the-film-meal, we bring forth Robert Morley. He makes the most of his part and as a cameo stands out better than his fellows, none of whom emerge very well as characters rather than props. His hair has been beautifully blow-waved and beneath each arm he carries a poodle. These are his two 'babies' and he is undoubtedly a 'queen'. There is a reason for the distinctions. Morley - or Meredith Meredew in his capacity as critic - leaves the stronbox security of his Securicor van, waves to the nice policeman, and enters his cottage. The curtains fly back to reveal a number of chefs, plus cameras and microphones, for this is not "This is Your Life" but a similar programme entitled "This is Your Dish". Meredew is thrilled ("Where's the camera?" he whispers in an aside to the head chef - Lionheart, naturally). The pie is served, and while the enormous Morley eats, Lionheart asks him if he is familiar with "Titus Andronicus". And in particular the scene where the queen is unwittingly fed her two babies in a pie.

Morley does a double take. "Where are my poodles?" Lionheart lifts the silver dish lid to reveal the heads. Voila - poodle pie. Morley is then spreadeagled on

his table and a funnel is thrust in his mouth. Lionheart and his colleagues then proceed to stuff the hapless critic with his own poodles until he expires. Even Price's comment - "he didn't have the stomach for it" hardly serves to lessen the revulsion one feels at such an unpalatable spectacle.

And then there was one. Ian Hendry. Edwina comes to him and says she has discovered where her mad father is hiding. She'll show Hendry, but no one else, least of all the police, so he agrees. But Eric Sykes hides in the back of Hendry's car, complete with two-way radio to Milo O'Shea. Edwina tricks Hendry, who is coshed, and drives the car off, giving a false trail. Sykes gives a running commentary from the confines of the boot, and we see Milo and police friends listening...

"... we've stopped. They're getting out. (Sound of door shutting and approaching train. Yes, definitely a train.) (Explosion, followed by silence).

And so exit Sykes in one of the film's most amusing moments. And Ian Hendry? All tied up in the old theatre, faced by the dastardly Lionheart, once more. The latter talks about an unfortunate character called Gloucester, who has his eyes put out in "King Lear". But, says Lionheart, putting two glowing knives on an ingenious trolley device designed to lower them slowly to Hendry's eyes, if you repeat your decision and give me the statuette, I'll spare you. Surprisingly, instead of peeing himself with terror and repenting, as thee and me would surely have done, Hendry refuses. So the knives come lower.

Meanwhile the police are hot on the trail. Lionheart knows he is done for so he starts setting fire to his beloved theatre. In the resultant panic and pandemonium, Edwina is knocked to the ground. She dies, quoting from the Immortal Bard, of course, in Lionheart's arms. The latter carries her to the blazing roof, while the police rescue Hendry in the nick of time (think about that one). The theatre burns away merrily and Lionheart crashes through the flames to his death. It is left for Hendry to recite a corny epitaph.

"He was overacting, as usual. But he did know how to make an exit."

And so to the credits and the Queen.

Is it all worth it? Well, yes. Despite the abundance of corny quippage and the incredibly contrived plot (which gives Lionheart access to anything he needs to carry out his revenge - wine cellars, hairdressing salon, TV van and cameras, gymnasium etc) and the flow of gore, this is entertainment the horror fan - and in particular the Price fan - cannot afford to miss. The theme music that opens the film is superb, incidentally. Quite surprising that, and it was a nice twist to show some very old silent Shakespearian films at the beginning too.

As I say, the actors and actresses, although all stars in their own rights, (Maggie Smith as an almost non-existent secretary) are not required to say, or do much, apart from Vince, who makes a meal to remember out of the part. The scene where he confronts the entire critics circle after they gave the award to someone else is almost touching, and his panchant for finding a suitable Shakespearian anecdote for each set of circumstances brings a timely chuckle as often as not. Whether standing on the balcony contemplating suicide - "... whether it is nobler in the mind to bear the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune..." or being rescued from the river by the tramp colony "... brave new world..." Lionheart finds a quote to suit.

Special effects are very well done - nothing as sumptuous as the Phibes sets - but nonetheless effective. Makeup could have been a little better in places - I certainly think that Price could have been made up as a more convincing Richard III, although on reflection, he was supposed to be a dismal performer.

So whither now, Vincent Price... or will it be wither now? There can't be many more parts for him as tempting as this one must have been, and in his own words it was "quite unlike anything I've done before." So was Phibes. Perhaps the promised REVENGE OF DOCTOR DEATH will give him a new lease of life. I hope so. I think life without Vince, or death without Vince, couldn't be quite the same.

Raise your glasses to the ageing virtuoso.

MASTER OF MIDDLE EARTH. The Achievement of J. R. R. Tolkien. (By Paul Kocher. Thames and Hudson 1973. £2.75).
Reviewer: THELMA COLLINS.

This book is definitely a must for all Tolkien fans. For those obliged by exam courses to read Lord of the Rings it makes an excellent introduction to the work, giving a quite detailed account of the story and explaining the fantasy world of Middle-Earth in which the action unrolls, and discusses its possible relation in time and space to our present earth.

For those who have already read Lord of the Rings, whether only once or many times, this review is an ideal follow-up, bringing out small points which may have been overlooked when reading so vast a creation. It also traces the development of the characters who take part in it.

For those fantasy lovers who have not read Tolkien's great work (can there be any who have not yet heard of its wonders?) and who perhaps feel that it might not be their cup of tea, a perusal of Paul Kocher's book may persuade them to take the plunge. After all, dwarves, elves etc, may be rather off-putting to those who think them only suitable for childrens' tales and feel they have long outgrown this sort of thing.

This is, to my mind, where this book scores a major point over many other reviews. Paul Kocher discusses in detail, first Tolkien's earlier work The Hobbit, out of which he later developed Lord of the Rings, which is purely a childrens' adventure story, meant to be read aloud to the very young, complete will jolly elves, grumpy dwarves and the inevitable fire-breathing dragon guarding his stolen hoard. Then Paul Kocher traces the gradual development of these characters in Tolkien's mind into the completely adult ones of the later epic and traces the development of the simple plot of The Hobbit into the great theme of the Rings, with its age-long fight between good and evil.

At this point in the review Kocher raises the question of whether, indeed, these two works can be considered as sequels in the usual sense of the word. In spite of the fact that many of the characters appear in both works and that the action of the first plot precedes that of the other, so vast is the canvas of the second and so adult its characters and conception, the connection between the two is at times hard to see.

Kocher points out that it is better to regard these two as entirely separate works and to accept each on its own merits. He sees The Hobbit as the quarry out of which came the materials to build the major work. Then the author goes on to discuss the various races inhabiting Middle-Earth, elves, dwarves, ents, hobbits and men, and outlines the histories of each, their differences and similarities and their relationships with each other.

Another chapter devoted to Aragorn the King finishes his review of The Hobbit and LOTR. The last chapter of the book is devoted to Tolkien's minor works - the few short stories, essays and poems, some of which have not appeared in book form. A bibliography concludes the work.

Those who, like myself, are sometimes put off a literary criticism by reviewers who insist in searching into the murkier depths of an author's psyche to find reasons why he writes as he does, will be pleased to find that this review is remarkably free from such delvings. Paul Kocher concentrates on the literature itself and only (necessarily) on the Christian background of Dr. Tolkien's philosophy on which he bases LOTR - the certainty of the existence of a Supreme Being and the purpose and design behind all things, and the final triumph of good over evil.

Some may think that this is a rather pricey book at £2.75 but for the serious student of Tolkien's works it is well worth the expense.

THE UNDEAD. (Edited by James Dickie. Neville Spearman 1971. Pan Books 1973. £2.10).
Reviewer: BRIAN MOONEY.

Although it is almost two years since this book was published originally, I

have not seen a review of it elsewhere.

I suppose it's because publishers try to attract the general reader rather than the specialist reader that they embellish their wares with misleading slogans and banal blurbs. This otherwise attractive and interesting - though by no means outstanding - collection of vampire stories has had the usual treatment. The blurb reads: "This unique collection of long-forgotten masterpieces of the macabre from masters of vampirism..." (hardback blurb). When I tell you that the contents include Stoker's Dracula's Guest and Benson's The Room in the Tower, you'll have an idea how unique and forgotten these tales are. I will concede that perhaps two or three of the stories, culled from Weird Tales, might be unfamiliar to the lay reader, but I don't think that BFS members will have any difficulties in recognising them. I'm not really sure what a "master of vampirism" is - could it be some obscure and esoteric University degree? The book is subtitled "Vampire Masterpieces", which is just a little pretentious. I realise that the criteria for masterpieces vary from reader to reader, but I think that the only tale in this collection worthy of the epithet is Marion Crawford's For The Blood Is The Life. The blurb also tells us that Derleth's The Drifting Snow is included in the anthology: it isn't, which surely demonstrates that inter-departmental liaison at Nevile Spearman's is not all that it could be!

The editor introduces his selection with an essay on the mythology, the alleged facts and the literary history of vampirism. He traces the way of the vampire in literature from the famous soires which also engendered Frankenstein. The Vampyre, originally credited to Byron, was the work of the poet's friend, Dr. Polidor; the tale is a rather stilted piece of work, which may well have lapsed into obscurity had it not been for the romantic circumstances in which it was written, and, I suspect, had it not been to the free plug given to it by Dumas pere (an ardent admirer of the story) in The Count of Monte Christo. But it seems to have been the first of the Gothic vampire tales, paving the way for many more stories in the genre from the sublimely beautiful La Morte Amoureuse to the somewhat ridiculous De Brignac's Lady. Although I eschew the restless seeking after of erotic symbolism, in certain stories the sexual connotations of vampirism cannot be ignored, and of course Mr. Dickie has to devote a couple of pages to this aspect of the genre. After mentioning the Sapphism in Carmilla, he turns his Dracula: he holds that Stoker was "...writing far more deeply than he knew..." and that the "... vampires and not Nina (sic), the insipid little English miss, was the woman of his dreams...". I wondered at this point if Mr. Dickie really does think that Stoker was writing more deeply than he knew, or is the editor unconsciously expressing his own desires? Having dealt with the obligatory sexual aspect, Mr. Dickie briefly explores the themes of the different stories in his anthology and concludes his essay with a brief examination of certain recorded instances of apparent vampirism. Is it necessary to say that he quotes that well worn chestnut, the Crogin Hall vampire? But he does come up with a couple new to me. There was Johannes Cuntius (straight up!) of Pentsch in Silesia whose body, when exhumed, was "... tender and florid, his Joyns not at all stiff but limber and movable... the blood sprang out as fresh as in the living..." In Dent, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, is the grave of an alleged vampire, George Hodgson, who died in 1715 at the age of 94. (I wonder if George needed a bath-chair for his nocturnal forays?). But the villagers must have thought him a danger for they drove a metal spike through memorial stone and coffin. The stone, it seems, still exists and the original inscription is said to be very well preserved. Mention is given too, to Mr. Sean Manchester, who in 1970 claimed that the "King Vampire of the Undead" was resident in Highgate Cemetery. As Mr. Manchester described his "King Vampire" as a Wallachian nobleman of the Middle Ages moved to England in the 18th century, I suspect that he was suffering from an overdose of the gallloping Stokers.

Now to the contents proper. There are two pieces of poetry in the book. The first, by Yeats, is on the title page. The second poem, titled The Undead, is by Richard Wilbur. First published in 1954, it is the most recent item in the book. It presents an image of the vampire as an outsider, who from childhood abhors and rejects the concept of human mortality. This poem is unusual in that it takes

a rather more sympathetic view of the vampire than is common. The final stanzas are perceptive and thought-provoking.

The stories in the anthology are varied and of a high quality, though as I said (supra) I think that only one of them is what might be termed a masterpiece. Again, whether each one of these tales truly merits a place in a vampire collection is a moot point. To an extent it depends on how far the reader subscribes to what has been called Stoker's Law. Stoker's Law is that collection of most salient points from European vampire legendary which Stoker used in Dracula. I tend to be open-minded about this, judging each tale on its own merits! I generally approve of Stoker's Law, but I accept that its contents have become cliches, and if a story avoids the use of it but still carries the hallmarks of vampirism I still find it acceptable. I suspect that Dickie has followed a similar course, as did Vadim in The Vampire (to which, by the way, The Undead is a companion volume) and Haining in The Midnight People. As once Stoker's Law is evaded no two persons will agree entirely on criteria, I question their place in this anthology several of Dickie's selections. Lovecraft's The Hound is one such tale. Dickie sees the hideous thing from the desecrated tomb as a "...vampire who seeks to live again through the agency of blood." On this premise one might as well describe every tale of ghostly revenge as a vampire story. I am also uncertain that the two tales by Clark Ashton Smith should be in this book, though this is an academic quibble, for in both instances Smith used the Lamia. The first tale is The End of the Story, which is set in 18th century Avernoigne, while the second is The Death of Alalotha, one of the Zothique stories. The merging point between lamia and vampires is debatable - personally I would place the former in the age of classicism. A better choice of vampire tale from the pen of Smith would have been A Rendezvous in Avernoigne, which is more Gothic in approach. But the two tales are enjoyable as vintage Smith, though the decadence is probably more Bauderlierian influence than genuine Smith. The last story about which I have doubts is Bierce's The Death of Halpin Frayser, though a dream-sequence in the story does contain strong vampiric imagery. But these doubts are private ones, so I will not be dogmatic and say that the four tales should have been excluded from the book.

For the remainder, a good if slightly hackneyed selection. The first story is Stoker's Dracula's Guest, which was excised from the original novel of Dracula supposedly because of the manuscript's excessive length. I do not think that the inclusion of this would have appreciably altered the length of Dracula and I am inclined to agree with James Dickie's assertion that its climax is similar enough to that if Le Fanu's Carmilla to lay it open to possible charges of plagiarism. Crawford's For The Blood is The Life I have already mentioned. I think that anthologists in the past have tended to under-rate this tale which is muted yet skillfully horrific. Another of the old favorites is Goring's The Tomb of Sarah. Written circa 1900, this story contains all the cliches of vampiric manifestation, yet is still rattling good fun. Apart from the Lovecraft and Smith stories, the other ex-Waird Tales offerings are Jacobi's Revelations in Black and Worrell's The Canal. Benson's The Room in the Tower has an insidious terror which is built up by a recurring nightmare suffered by the narrator, culminating in a suitably gruesome climax. The remaining tales are Wellman's When it was Moonlight, which has a clever and original way of destroying a vampire, Starkie's The Old Man's Story, which is allegedly true and Count Stenbock's A True Story of a Vampire, which contains the symbolism of male homosexuality in the way that Carmilla contains lesbian symbolism. And before anyone hoists me with my own petard, I would refer to Dickie's essay in which he describes Stenbock as an "...eccentric homosexual... who was wont to dine seated in his own coffin..." Each to his own taste - if you haven't tried it, don't knock it already!

A brief word now about some of the plots. Smith's End of the Story - though as well written as any Smithick tale - has a contrived plot which makes it very jejune. The plot relies on the hero, Christophe Morand, discovering an ancient and dreadful manuscript which is kept in a secret drawer - with several other proscribed books - by the Father Abbot of a monastery wherein Christophe shelters from a tempest. Hilaire, the Abbot, reveals the drawer and the other books to

Christophe, but forbids him to touch the manuscript. Why, if he did not want Christophe to see the thing, did he reveal its hiding place? Contrivance - and rather clumsy contrivance at that - such as this would have been forgivable in a beginner, but not from a writer of Smith's status. I approved of several other of the plots because contrary to usual practice they reveal how the vampire came to the undead state, and in each tale they are true to actual mythology. In For the Blood... and Halpin Frayser the vampires are murder victims; in The Room in the Tower the vampire is a suicide; and in When it was Moonlight the corpse was inadvertently touched by shafts of light from the full moon and thus came to life within death.

Certainly as an anthology this book would not suit everyone, but for those who have an interest in the vampire lore - and particularly those newcomers who are just starting to build up a library - it is a worthwhile buy.

ARDOR ON AROS. (By Andrew J. Offut. Dell Books 1973. 45p).

Reviewer: IAN COVELL.

"A satiric masterpiece of crossed swords and sorceries" proclaims the (symbolic) cover. Surprisingly, for an American paperback, it is almost correct.

The book is primarily a debunker of the worldscapes set up by Burroughs and Kline (with a few sideswipes to Edward P. Bradbury (Moorecock) en route).

Time after time, references are made to the inconsistencies between the societies predicated in Burroughs' work (Mars, Venus, Pellucidar, etc) and the actual societies that would exist if the predication were taken to their natural limit rather than being subverted by our own society's moral tenets.

As readers of Offut may already know (and others not) Offut uses explicit sexual references in his books; these sections are never purely for sensationalism - rather they are merely natural adjuncts to the story. He performs the same service in Ardor on Aros, and uses them in a direct satirical attack on the aforementioned authors. He points out that the basis of many such books was the kidnapping of the hero's wife (no unnatural relationships were in evidence - most were solemnised in some manner) but the books shied away from the obvious follow on to such a beginning. No heroine was ever raped, even after being imprisoned for many months. Loss of chastity (very, very, very rare) was usually followed by suicide. The only one with genitals was the villain, who was always clobbered just as he advanced on the tight-lipped (or shrieking, dependant on which authors you read) heroine to subject her to a "fate worse than death". (Ostracism?). The hero was chaste and true to his love, rescuing other maidens (sic) but rarely even getting a kiss as a reward (unless she was to marry him later). In Offut's world, things are different.

Women are treated as chattels, gifts, slaves, property. It would be so in a barbarian society. There is none of Burroughs' world, where barbarians treat women by Arthurian Round Table rules (sic). Rape is commonplace, extramarital sex (marriage exists) is part of normal life. 99.9% of females have first sexual contact "without a hint of love".

It was never so in Burroughs', Kline's, Bradbury's novels.

An indictment of escapist literature?

The rationale behind Offut's world of Aros (Ares-Mars-Eros) is not perfect, a fact the narrator notes. Present on Aros are: duplicates of Liz Taylor and Sophia Loren (called Dejah Thoris); an intelligent parrot (complete with his tribe and their human pets - "Jimmy wants a cracker", states one of the pets); a city straight out of Flash Gordon; a non-chivalraiv custom; a - but why go on? If this hasn't whetted your appetite - if you weren't entertained by Live Is Evil Spelled Backwards (Paperback Library 1970) or The Castle Keeps (Berkeley 1972) or even the sword and sorcery novel Messenger of Zhuvastou (1973) by the same author - if you don't wish to know what connection there is between lesser gravity and female vanity, nor why an equatorial jungle manages to survive only feet from a desert (cf. Lin Carter: Imaginary Worlds) and why it disappears when the hero turns his head - then leave this book on the shelf.

Otherwiss run, do not walk, to your nearest specialist bookdealer.

WOLFWINTER. (By Thomas Burnett Swann. Ballantine 1975. 50p).

Reviewer: ADRIAN COLE.

Swann's ninth* fantasy to date is every bit as rewarding as his previous works. Set in the time of the poet Sappho (who appears as a close friend of the heroine, Erinna) it evokes the atmosphere of 'a time when all the world was spring'. Erinna, a plain girl, sensitive about being flat-chested at the tender age of sixteen wanders away from an orgiastic festival and in the woods meets a satyr, or faun. He leads her to his tree home and seduces her. Unfortunately, before the lovers can see each other again, Erinna's father procures a husband for her in the shape of Timon, the Sybarite. "I married you for you dowry not your maidenhead" he tells her, adding to her utter boredom with Sybaris. When her child is born with faun's ears Timon has his servants leave it in the field of wolves to be devoured, but Erinna rescues the child, Lysis, and flees into the woods. She is pitied by Tages, a pale skinned man of adopted Etruscan descent. Erinna hopes to find the fauns in the woods who might know her own satyr on Lesbos, and she falls in with Skimmer and his friends, who treat her with all due deference, and who treat Lysis - whom they call Hoofless - like a brother.

Sappho comes to the woods eventually, bringing Erinna's long lost lover, Great-thorn, but he has aged very quickly (a satyr's life being far shorter than a man's) and after a brief, sad reunion, he dies. Sappho encourages Erinna not to pine, but to love Skimmer, which she does happily enough. The fauns are threatened by the awful White People, pale shades from the necropolis in the forest, and servants of the dog-headed Cerberus. In order to save her son, who has been bitten by one of the wolves of the White People (a mark for sacrifice) Erinna offers herself up for sacrifice in his stead. And she descends the steps of one of the tomb houses, down into the earth to confront the terrible god...

I won't divulge the ending and so spoil things for those of you who will undoubtedly be reading the book. It is told in the same beautiful style of Swann's earlier works and is full of emotion and feeling. There is a shadow looming over the tale, as in Day of the Minotaur, Green Phoenix, and others, namely the knowledge that the creatures of mythology that are brought so lovingly to life in these tales will all soon be vanishing from the woods and the countryside. Man's term of dominion will truly begin.

* Swann's works to date: Day of the Minotaur (Ace); The Weirdwoods (Ace); The Dolphin and the Deep (Ace); Moondust (Ace); Where is the Bird of Fire? (Ace); The Forest of Forever (Ace); The Goat without Horns (Ballantine); Green Phoenix (Daw); Wolfwinter (Ballantine).

STRANGE ECSTASIES. (Edited by Michel Parry. Panther 1975. 30p).

Reviewer: DAVID A. SUTTON.

It is symptomatic in the horror field for the subject of a "theme" anthology, on which the publisher or editor hangs the chosen stories, to be in many cases a subject often unjustifiably associated with such tales. One could cite numerous examples where a story or stories do not fit in with the idea and subject set out by the title-implication, or sub-title, or the introduction to such and such a book. There are, unfortunately for horror devotees, embarrassing examples of the opposite: The Pan Books of Horror tend, if anything, to live up to the word "horror" to a degree beyond bearable acceptance. But perhaps this is a bad example in any case, since Strange Ecstasies more than fulfils its theme by title-implication, by sub-title ("A mind-blowing fantasy anthology of unearthly drug stories) and by the editor's introduction; this latter a broad-minded and very readable item from someone who has obviously done his homework - perhaps too well.

Maybe I should qualify "too well". I think there is some justification to feel that in a couple of the stories, the authors have used drugs as a mere vehicle in SF stories where the plot has become contrived. Perhaps Michel Parry has chosen these because they utilise drugs and thus fit very well into the definition of the anthology, whereas perhaps a better story, if chosen, might not have leaned as heavily on drugs for its *raison d'être*. Take for example, Richard Wilson's

The Big Fix. The story is beautifully built up using the sleasy world of the pusher, but then runs off on a tangent onto another planet where Earthmen (junkie Earthmen at that!) are used in arena battles to satiate the populace's violent tendencies and thus eliminate war. Another, Pipe Dream by Chris Miller has all the jargon of the drug underground culture, and again an SF development that seems almost contrived. But at least in this story it is played for laughs and as the last story in the book, it rounds off the collection nicely.

The anthology as a whole is chronologically set out, and I found myself enjoying more of the first half (the older tales) than the second. I don't think this is entirely because the latter half of the book is mainly SF, since I enjoy SF anyway, but perhaps it isn't really the medium for the drug story - I certainly don't think it works with complete success in the stories chosen for this book.

Arthur Machen's The White Powder ("The Novel of the White Powder") is strongest in the book. This story forms part of The Three Imposters, a loosely connected collection of tales by the author. Machen doesn't always work for me, but The White Powder is a finely wrought supernatural tale, holding back any mention of the horror until very near the end, yet retaining one's attention nonetheless. Machen quite often rises to cosmic proportions and there is a vision in this tale (which heralds the beginning of the horror) which is so typical of him and so marvellous, set as it is in the down-to-earth London of his day.

Wells' The New Accelerator is perhaps SF by inclination, but although the drug which the author describes induces in the taker an ultra high life-speed where everyone else appears to have stopped moving, his characters' behaviour is very mundane. Yet, this is why I enjoy H. G. Wells so much: his people are so human and subject to the whims and caprices of us all; and here he captures the essence of what it would feel like if you of I were to take his drug, as we stepped outside our houses to view life that, like a film stopped at a frame, had become motionless.

Michel Parry seems to feel that we will all like the Fritz Leiber story if we like Leiber. I like him, both his SF and fantasy, but especially the few earlier horror tales of his I've read. However, The Secret Song is a confusing story. Perhaps I should give it a second read. Belknap Long's The Hounds of Tindale - well the Lovecraft influence, the Lovecraft innuendo is here, but of course Long is a good enough writer to quell some of the more coloured, descriptive outbursts of the earlier author, in his own work, and this tale is enjoyable without being too much influenced.

Finally a mention of Clark Ashton Smith's The Plutonian Drug. This tale opens the book, a good choice I thought and Smith's descriptive prose visualises well the effects of a drug that allows the user to see a few hours into the past and a similar length of time into the future. The ending becomes obvious, but Smith succeeds by his ability to conjure fantastic images. Other stories by F. H. Davis, Frederick Pohl and Norman Spinrad fill out the collection and amply fit into the editor's vision for the book - the Spinrad (Subjectivity) using a futuristic setting where a new strain of lysergic acid, LSD-105, is used for a flight to Centaurus with bizarre and amusing results...

An anthology that collects both SF and fantasy together in a blend of stories about drugs, it will delight the enthusiast I am sure, especially the enthusiast who has in the past had his fingers burned with the so-called "theme" anthology. Michel Parry has been ultimately successful in sticking rigidly to his theme without resorting to garbage. Strange Ecstasies is well worth a read.

3. ————— MUSIC

THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON. (By The Pink Floyd. Harvest SHVL 804, 1973).
Reviewer: DAVID A. SUTTON.

The Pink Floyd have spent a considerable length of time in producing this album, just under nine months in fact, the time it takes a human foetus to develop; which incidentally, is an intentional analogy. I won't say that we have a completely new Floyd here, but this album is so different in many ways from what

has gone before; a kind of rebirth and yet undoubtedly a Floyd product. Whereas, of the previous albums, Atom Heart Mother was innovative, Meddle was again typical of earlier music. On this latest album, though, we have the addition of a saxophonist and large quantities of female vocal backing. The Floyd also use a VCS3 synthesiser on two tracks at least. The overall effect is, initially, stunning, yet this LP above all their others is the least cosmotically inclined.

The Dark Side of the Moon is a vocal statement backed up by the group's inevitable mastery of technique: they know how and when to play beautiful music, and even with the VCS3, they indulge with complete control, and do not over-use the electronic gadgetry at their disposal. Very little of the lyrics here reflect the Floyd's hitherto "cosmic" approach and neither does it display their "pastoral" style. This is what is really new. Some of the music attains a cosmic blend (Great Gig in the Sky, Any Colour you like) though this is for the most part overtly denied with lyrics. Many of the band's cosmic pieces in the past (Set the Controls for the Heart of the Sun, Saucerful of Secrets) have used a musical formula with little or no vocal sounds intervening.

In these songs, the Floyd's message is simple. There is an interplay between two lifestyles, shown right away in Breathe, in which we are shown an idealistic and mechanistic way of life. Time strongly defines the way we all tend to waste our lives and it is both eloquent and poignant. The whole album revolves around a theme of life and death: The Great Gig in the Sky is a tremendous track, but it is not a reference to some cosmic fantasy - it is in fact the happy hunting-ground for rock bands! Seriously, besides a search for basic truths, the words on this album seem also to be partly autobiographical, their own feelings and desires.

On side two, Money has a squealing saxophone, but the development becomes strained, with unusually brash guitars for the Floyd. The words, though, dig in straight to the point, with calculated power. Us and Them has a lovely church-like organ beginning, replaced with soft guitars and a nicely-breathed sax; the words quiet and meaningful. This one, for me, rates second best track on the album to Time, which has a blend of the very best we know of the Floyd.

The two final tracks, Brain Damage and Eclipse are less powerful than any of the rest and in Eclipse especially, a crescendo is built up and dropped off suddenly to end the album in an apparently un-Floyd-like manner. However, Careful with that Axe Eugene (on, Ummagumma) suffers nothing from being quietly played out. We tend to feel, especially with regard to what has gone before on Dark Side of the Moon, that a climax of huge majesty is obligatory. But then, it is a reflective album: the cover shows a beam of light being split up into its component colours through a prism; white light is life and the colours are the diversity of life. On the inside of the sleeve the colours run across with the green zig-zagging, suggesting brain-waves being recorded on an encephalograph. If anything, the music leads from light to dark, the last two tracks bringing with them madness and menace.

Sound effects are used extensively too, but nothing surprising for the Floyd. There are bells, chimes, airport announcements, heartbeats and even a cash register playing a rhythm. Eeriest of all the voices are several speaking here and there, snippets of conversation and a hollow, inane laugh. These come as undertones and give a special dream-like quality to the LP.

The three non-lyrical tracks (besides Great Gig) are Speak to Me, On the Run and Any Colour you Like, with the latter taking the pride of place, though On the Run uses the synthesiser in a controlled and interesting way. However, since the album is basically a lyrical statement, it might be right to feel that these tracks are musical "intervals". Then the title of the album itself, other than one reference in Brain Damage, seems totally alien from what appears on it. In looking at Atom Heart Mother, the tracks (though arbitrary), the title and everything, are related. I think Dark Side of the Moon is a reference to the fact that because we only see one half, we imagine the reverse side of the moon to be in total darkness all the time - and darkness is a symbol of evil - and the subject matter of the album is the grim panoply of life, the waste, the money-grabbing, the brain-washing.

Aside from trying to work out what the Floyd are saying, or analysing their

(CONTINUED, PAGE 26)

retrospectators

Some comments, views and observations on DARK HORIZONS 6. Conducted by ADRIAN COLE.

A goodly selection of epistles this time out, and about as varied a spectrum of opinion as is possible - the horizons of your interest stretch in many diverse directions. Anyway, to the letters, which have been slightly rearranged. (Send your grumbles and comments on this in with your next loc).

First topic to discuss on DH6 is the artwork, which as you will remember was litho throughout. The shortest and most direct comment came from Ian Covell - "I hated the cover" and Ramsey Campbell was short and to the point - "Illustrations well, no point is dissimulation: I don't think any of them worth litho. But the litho may encourage the artists to improve, and others to submit." Chris Bursey adds - "I'm afraid the artwork was conspicuous only by its absence. The idea of a full page illo on a stiffer sheet of paper card is a good idea though! A need for artwork of a much better standard was the general opinion of all." Tim Edwards writes - "A glance through the zine reveals an imperative need for some quality artwork - the garish purple blotches of the cover and the crudely drawn interior illos make this more and more apparent at each successive viewing." (Note: some copies had a black cover). Rosemary Pardoe - "... there are sufficient inside illos, and the front cover is very striking (although it's more the magenta colour than the artwork itself which catches the eye)..." And here's an interesting view from Thomas Hosty - "... the cover, like DH5's, it belied the quality of the material inside - it was lousy (well, no one's perfect). It looked for all the world like a poor cover for the cheapest, crudieast, most sensational horror-comic in existence (no names, no libel suits)..." He didn't like it you see, and one last comment from Mike Chinn - "I also approve of the litho illustrations, definitely needed."

So the pattern there was much the same. My immediate reaction to such an adverse avalanche was not only to get hold of some decent artwork (which is about as easy as sailing alone around the world in a cast iron bucket) but also to curb any tendencies to do any more covers. Mind you, in my defence of DH6 artwork, I must say I had practically nothing to go on. Be that as it may, let us go on to a subject which brought a far more varied response - namely fiction, which made its DH debut last time out.

Ramsey Campbell writes - "... the stories I thought had one thing in common: surprisingly vivid imagination and images. For my taste, Hurley's needed to be a little more explicit as a story, Parkes' rather less party-line Christian. Larkin's could, with some fleshing out and general sharpening, quite possibly make it into the money market; it contains some fine flights of fantasy..." And at the opposite end of the scale, Mike Chinn - "... 'The Missile'... are you sure that wouldn't have been better off in an SF zine? It smacked too much of Von Daniken for me (not that I'm saying that's a bad thing mind you), but it seemed out of place in DH. 'L'Inferno 72' was good, even if the ending was a little clumsy. My only gripe is that I couldn't make out whether it was supposed to be funny or not; it seemed to change its mind halfway through. Ah, me, I suppose we must put up with the more erotic element of fantasy. I'm talking of course, about 'The Lay of the Last Zydrin'. That story took ages to reach an extremely obvious ending! It just didn't do anything for me..."

Gordon Larkin - "It's good to see some fiction within the pages, and a motley selection too. 'The Missile' was interesting in its strangeness but I preferred 'L'Inferno' and I loved the ironic twist - the paradox of paradise!..."

Rosemary Pardoe - "... I think there was too much fiction this time - I would think that one, or at the most two, stories per issue would be ample. Nonetheless I am all for a certain amount of fiction in DH. The idea seems to have got around that I would not publish fiction when I was editor. This simply was not true - the fact is I never received any printable fiction. I did - it's true - receive two of the stories you print this time, but both came after I'd officially given up the magazine, and I had to send them to the new editor. I have no criticisms

of the stories themselves this time - they are all of reasonably high class, and all well worth printing. 'The Missile' I'm afraid left me cold - I'm not saying it was anything but a good story, but it simply made no impression on me. 'L'Inferno' I liked for its original ideas, but by far the best of the three was 'The Lay of the Last Zydrin'. Its idea was far from original, but Gordon Larkin has such a superb way of putting things over (if anything can be called prose-poetry his work certainly can) that the story made a great impression on me, and I shall probably read it several times. It is certainly up to professional standard..."

A more astute appraisal from Tim Edwards - "... on the plus side there was the introduction of fiction, which was conspicuous by its absence in issues 4 and 5. All three stories were good; and the one by Gordon Larkin particularly so, for it was excellently structured, moving as it did relentlessly to its climax and holding its mood and tension right to the end, as a good story should. Some of its more egregious verbal extravagances though, could have done with pruning - words like 'nightling' and 'starsome' really put one off; and in some places, there was a surfeit of simile and metaphor. A description of the monster's outward appearance might also have been in order..."

Last word from Thomas Hosty - "...I was glad to see a strong fiction selection this time round, but it could have been stronger: there simply can't be too much fiction in DH. Dave Sutton's idea of tapping Whirlpool for fiction is an excellent one. Perhaps it could be arranged that, in future issues, each story has an illustration of its own? Certainly the artwork in 6 was of a high standard, but Tim Youlden's two drawings would have been better connected to a story: in subject and quality they didn't seem quite suitable to remain totally independant. By the way, am I just being dense, or was Steve Sneyd's title really nothing to do with the picture? I'm afraid I could see no connection at all between the two".

Well, a bit on art again that slipped in. So fiction goes down well. There will be more to come, because it's obvious from the stories I'm getting that its the most popular topic. As for this Whirlpool idea, also suggested at one time by Rosemary, there's one major problem involved. Namely the stories that generally circulate are far too long for DH. 2000 words is about the limit, and stories in Whirlpool reach 8000 and 10000 sometimes. But I don't think there'll be any shortage of material for DH judging by what I'm getting, so not to worry.

DH6 had only one feature, namely Martin Rickett's Weird Tales parody, which I found personally well thought out and highly amusing. It first appeared in a zine called Egg run by Peter Roberts, and I take the opportunity of apologising for not mentioning the fact last time out. Here are a few comments:

Mike Chinn - "... I thought the 'Wired Tales' a little uns subtle, but enjoyable all the same, and 'The Thing Outside' was quite good too, once I'd gotten in to it..." Ian Covell - "... the 'Wired Tales' spoof I thought clever, and the play on Lovecraft ('Hovercraft') I thought particularly clever because I always believed him to contain a load of hot air. In a few months, if nobody else had done it, I would have written in some comments on the boring Lovecraft and his fanatical (fat-headed) followers. This spoof saved me from the trouble..." That's bound to elicit some response! I think, myself, that the parody was more of a tribute to Lovecraft than an attack. Chris Bursey is more inclined to acute disfavour. He thought the parody "... worthy of Hell..."

Rosemary Pardoe, though, thought it - "... very funny, almost inspired...", while Gordon Larkin conversely assumes I "... put in the rather silly 'Wired Tales' to fill up space..." Tim Edwards was in favour - "Martin Ricketts' 'Wired Tales' lampoon was delicious; the Lovecraft pastiche was mordantly accurate and hilariously funny. This is the first example of satire I've seen in a fanzine; I'd like to see more..." and Thomas Hosty - "... it was an interesting experiment and very amusing in places (especially the letters page), but I feel that it was too introverted and, for want of a better word 'fannish', to be really suitable for DH. Ideally, all material in DH should be oriented directly towards the nitty-gritty of fantasy, not towards other thus-oriented magazines. Still, as an occasional feature, and with the proviso that we are not treated now to a long series of satires and parodies, it was worthwhile and entertaining..."

There were only a handful of reviews in DH6, a fact that has been rectified,

although not everyone is in favour of reviews:

Chris Bursey - "... I get rather bored of review after review of Continental films of fantastic perversions (sorry, Eddy); also more books should be reviewed so that no more than two or three are given in-depth reviews, the rest are given short (five or less lines) mentions. A general record column, or record reviews would be welcome..."

Tim Edwards was contented at least - "... the review section, I think, was just about the right size..." although Rosemary Pardoe says - "... the reviews are all quite good but I'd like to see more (or perhaps that's easier said than done)..." Mike Chinn - "I'll keep quiet about the reviews, since they performed their job adequately (and you can't go into literary raptures over them anyway) ..." Ramsey Campbell was short and sweet - "Reviews are to the point."

Thomas Hosty - "... the review section maintained DH6's standard on most other fronts. It was well-written, wide-ranging (considering the small number of reviews) and, unlike the section in 5, strictly relevant to the fantasy field. The gold star must go to Adrian Cole's extremely funny and all-too-accurate comments on the latest Gor book. The only notable omission was the music reviews - perhaps that will be rectified in 7, in answer to the editorial appeal..."

Yes, I'm beginning to get response music-wise - there is an undoubted interest in the subject, certainly enough to make it a feature of DH in the future.

And so to poetry, the one field which I myself am not keen on, but which does have a place here too. Ramsey Campbell comments - "Poems; well, they're amateur. Thelma Collins comes off best. Hurley - fair imagery, but 'man' to rhyme with 'sang' and 'crown' with 'grown'? Please, please. Ford, now I look at his piece again, seems to have caught the old Weird Tales quality rather well - Dorothy quick I think. Dave Riley - I'd say you'd be happier with blank verse. There's nothing wrong with that, of course! And this sort of maggotty mysticism isn't my thing, I fear..."

A brief word from Mike Chinn - "... I won't say anything about the poetry since I can't stand it in any form..." and lastly and more thoroughly, Thomas Hosty - "... the poetry. Oh dear! Although 'In Fantasy' wasn't bad (it reminded me in part of some of Pete Sinfeld's lyrics), the other three were terrible. 'Antarctica' started off as a rhythmic, alliterative piece, but collapsed after the first stanza, trailing off into awkward and over-long lines (e.g. 'cyclopean' in 1.17 may be a hovercraft totem-word, but that does not justify its inclusion in a line which, in the end, is two syllables too long). 'Worship Me' had much to praise in it, particularly John Hurley's talent for evocative phrases ('the half-god wisely wild' was a gem), but was wrecked in the long run by unbalanced lines, lack of firm rhythmic control and slavish attention to rhyme (notice the identical rhyme of 'sin' and 'sin' in 11.68). Any life left in the magazine's poetic corpus was rudely stamped out by David Riley's neo-Romantic maulderings. 'In Peace' demonstrated how good basic inspiration can be concealed and near-obliterated by bad technique: among this poem's faults one may list sing-song rhythm, misplacement of words ('diseased' in 1.3 is placed so that its natural pronunciation stress clashes with the line rhythm, tending to make one stress the first, not the second syllable), slavish rhyming ('gas' and 'pass') and incongruity of vocabulary ('clouds of gas' 1.3 does not belong in the same poem, much less the same couplet, as 'spectral shapes' 1.4 - the one phrase is down to earth, modern, almost non-poetic, while the other is outdated, Gothic and affected). According to the editorial, you are deluged with poetry - if so, then edit more stringently: raise your standards of acceptability, do a bit more weeding before you publish. Fantastic subject matter does not excuse poor technique: indeed, a badly written poem will not permit its subject matter to affect the reader as strongly as if the technique of the poem was good..."

I may be deluged, but the four poems in DH6 were the best of the bunch, so I leave the rest to your imagination, Thomas. In my own view, poetry is best left to the professionals... anyone can write it badly, while a minute minority write it well.

So, specific topics over, I'll quote general comments. DH6 met with general approval overall, chiefly because I think you agree with the sort of direction

I'm making for (although there are those who would have me take a more abrupt and vertical direction straight down).

Andy Northern (who recently ran Arc, a particularly good fantasy zine, now sadly defunct) writes - "... I've seen all the issues of DH, number 6 being the most impressive of the lot, the introduction of a certain amount of humour and music being specially commendable. I didn't like issue 5 very much (too much poetry and poor reproduction) and before that I was a bit indifferent either way..."

Brian Mooney was not amused - "... I hope you don't mind me saying that I didn't much like your approach to your written editorial in DH6. It had rather a false 'trendy', all-in-the-same-groove tone, which I found grated a bit. I think that you can write quite well, without having to subscribe to such 'journalistic' tricks. Of course, it's likely that most others approved and that I'm one of the odd ones out; perhaps I'm getting a bit long in the tooth!..." So if you see any black-winged flapping shapes over the rooftops of Leamington Jpa, it could be Brian Mooney. That editorial, written while sitting on a cold slab in a vault beneath a local undertakers, gleaned diverse comment.

Mike Chinn - "To very much for DH6, it certainly was an improvement on the previous issues. I suppose the first thing that I noticed was the humour and light-heartedness in the editorial (I don't know what came over me, I rarely read editorials anyway, but reading it before anything else!)". Chris Bursey - "... as for your editorial, it read much like Forrest Hackerman having just been beaten around the head with a Clockwork Orange..."

Gordon Larkin - "DH6! Undoubtedly one of the more meaty cadavers to come my way in recent months and a sure sign that its horizons are glowing in a new dawn. Two major faults though. The first and fangmost is the lightheartedness of the editorial and the various editorial comments that occur throughout. I think a more serious/refined approach is needed there, but do keep the humour in 'scavenger' which I thought a delightful finale. DH must have a certain maturity if it is to attract new members... The other fault (which I've just realised is not a fault, more a sad ailing) is the lack of a major article - even a minor article. That, with an improvement in artwork and general presentation should make future issues even better..."

Rosemary Pardoe - "Of course anything would be good in comparison with DH5, but DH6 really is good by any standards. For a start the first impressions are good... Layout is reasonably good but perhaps a little more definition between items would be an improvement (wider spaced titles for instance). Duplication is a little bit faded in parts, but still quite readable... I would like to see discussions of fantasy in music in DH. There is a problem though, as far as I'm concerned - for music to be good it has, in my opinion, to be as near perfect as possible. (I think most people, if they analyse their reasons for liking particular pieces of music would come to that conclusion). When you get to the question of perfection in music you get onto a metaphysical plane in which there is fantasy in all music. (Am I making myself clear? Probably not). Thus I see fantasy in all music I love - from Vaughan Williams and Prokofiev through Buffy St. Marie to Rick Wakeman and King Crimson (and I am rather surprised that Dave Weldrake didn't see the parallel between 'Mars' and 'The Devil's Triangle' - it is very obvious)... Re your comment on Allan Parkes' review of Blish's book - if you are in alternate theories about the life of Jesus, I recommend 'The Passover Plot' by Hugh Schonfiend (which includes the idea that Jesus didn't die on the cross) and 'King Jesus' by Robert Graves which is a superb fictionalisation of Graces' theories concerning Jesus' relationships with the mystery religions of the time, and with Mother Goddess worship in particular. And read 'The Sacred Mushroom and the Cross' by Allegro if you want to top it off with a good chuckle. Anyway, back to DH. There's one final point to cover and that's your editorial 'presence'. Your actual editing and balancing of the issue is fine (apart from the over-abundance of fiction) and I also enjoyed your editorial and column. Some would consider them over-ghoulish, but I don't think the society magazine has to be deadly serious throughout..."

Re the comment about music, here's an opposite sentiment from Mike Chinn - ... for Arioch's sake, try and stop correspondence about what people can and can't

hear in Floyd and Hawkwind, it is petty and serves no purpose (except perhaps to show off the writer's knowledge of music)..." Sorry about that, Arioch, didn't realise the vibes were penetrating your plane, there.

Tim Edwards - "... As to editorial policy, I think that DH should be fiction-orientated, for I should imagine that it's the fantastic in literature that attracts people to the BFS. However, coverage of fantasy and macabre art in all its diverse manifestations - even following its ramifications into modern pop music if you really feel you must - should also be admissible, though to a lesser degree. As a concomitant to all this, I'd advocate the relentless elimination of all such things as 'Not My Philosophy, Horatio'. Pray permit it to sink mercifully and quietly into oblivion - whence it should have been, and whence others of its ilk should never be allowed to emerge (from). Now to the vexed problem of balancing a zine. Ideally I think a varied selection of fars, including fiction, reviews, articles, poetry (if really good) and any other miscellaneous good quality items that may turn up, is what DH should aim for (oh, I left out good artwork). However, with a concern like DH, which runs on a flow of voluntary contributions that inevitably varies in quantity and quality, editorial policy must of necessity be elastic; and it obviously better to have a slight preponderance of imbalance of material in one department (as I think you've done with the fiction) than to clutter up the zine with low quality items in an effort to conform to some rigid, preconceived policy. Anyway, all carping criticisms aside, I enjoyed DH6 very much - I think you've made an excellent debut as editor..."

Thanks, Tim, for those few kind words; it's nice to have one's efforts appreciated. Here are Thomas Hooty's general remarks - "Adrian Cole has outdone Herbert West: after an abysmal fifth issue, DH has risen from the dead! Apart from the cover and the lettercol, 5 was a waste of paper and seemed (to me at least) to be the death-rattle of the magazine. But 6 has revived my hopes... being reminiscent of the sort of extravagant over-writing common in lower-grade horror comics, mixing most incongruously with nadstal slang..." Mr Hooty is evidently well into horror comics it would seem, low grade or otherwise "... but the message under the mounds of verbal garbage was an encouraging one. As far as DH is concerned variety must be the spice of life: the wider the range of subject discussed, the more interesting the magazine will be, and interest is vital. It is pleasing to hear an editor appealing for material on such controversial fields as musical fantasy (will no one ever mention Frocum Harum in this context?) and television horror (the intentional sort, that is, not Andy Williams). If the response covers as wide a field as the appeal then DH should be in for a fascinating future... To wind up the issue we come to 'Scavenger'. What a marvellous idea! This gossipy blend of facts and sneering jokes is great fun (but keep them in their place - the Meliadus joke on page 10 belonged on the Scavenger page). Don't scatter the items like that or DH will begin to resemble the Readers Digest! You're doing a great job - keep it up and DH has a promising future..."

Yes, I suppose bits and pieces floating about the place do tend to stick out like orcs in a nunnery - still, I don't like leaving big gaps in the middle of an issue. □

DERLETH AS I KNEW HIM, by RAMSEY CAMPBELL (Continued from page 7)

strange that he should prefer watching me to telling his beads and attending to the service. I found it difficult to account for his reading my column so faithfully, if he thought so little of it. But he showed, at ending, an apt sense of the fitting expression when he signed the letter, 'A Sick Citizen'."

So Place of Hawks, where Derleth lived, wasn't entirely Walden.

-oo-

The second, and concluding part of "Derleth As I Knew Him" will be published in Dark Horizons 8. □



Layouts



A COMICS COLUMN

BY RAKSEY CAMPBELL

This is the first of a regular series of comics reviews. The listing of comics may be less regular. Blame the vagaries of distribution in this country. This column is not aimed at completist collectors, since I'm not one. The issues discussed are those most recently available in England at the time of going to press.

CONAN 31 (The Shadow on the Tomb): An odd moral tale, told half in flashback, proving that black magic is bad for you. As has been happening in recent issues, Conan kills half the characters, but at least he gets it over with nere in the first few panels. John Buscema's art continues to strike me as inappropriate. The influence of Jack Kirby is apparent (for example, shouting heads popping up around the frame of the opening action scene) but hasn't been integrated; Buscema's more personal panels are delicate in their outlines but never create tension as Barry Smith's did between the delicate and the savage. On the credit side, Roy Thomas writes his usual witty pastiche, and there's an effective device to carry the narrative in and out of flashback. In sum, a minor issue.

DEMON 9 (Whatever Happened to Farley Fairfax?): What is it about Jack Kirby? Separated, his components look fairly unimpressive. His art is bold, simple if not crude and tends to caricature. His dialogue and in particular his punctuation roar almost continuously. His narrative invention is unceasing, but it is that of a raconteur: like Henry Miller, he lets his sub-plots and minor characters run away with him (though it may be unfair to make this point about this comic so early). Perhaps it's his use of emblematic characters and visuals which are gradually undermined by his determinedly personal view of things. Perhaps it's the cumulative effect of the way his head-on closeups thud against the eyes and his double-page panels, when appropriate, provide relief from the constricted violence of his pages. Perhaps it's that he has both persisted uninfluence in his primitivism and has used it as a frame for his considerable imagination, often developing along parallels with contemporary sf. Or perhaps it's simply that he tells a good yarn straightforwardly and with relish, as this one, which makes engrossing reading of sorcerous battles, reincarnation and a Phantom of the Opera (or theatre, anyway).

HOST RIDER 2 (Shake Hands with Satan): offers further proof that Marvel have undertaken too much with this one. You can't introduce a convincing motorcycle gang under the Comics Code. Particularly not when our heroine has been carried off by a gang against whom "the horrors of Satan's hell might even pale". Perhaps because of which, the hell which appears towards the end of this issue is pretty pale already. Gary Friedrich has a reasonable ear for dialogue and makes it as savage as he dares, but Jim Mooney's art is at best banal. Its cliffhanging ending is resolved in **SON OF SATAN 1**. Someone must be worried about sales.

KULL THE CONQUEROR (Mind-Monsters of the Warrior Queen or inside, more sedately, Swords of the White Queen): gains by the art of Marie Severin. It's not as savage as the best of Marvel's Conan, and she's better with more overtly horrific material (as in her recent version of Sturgeon's *It*). Nonetheless, her style is simple and clear, and quietly realistic in a manner no doubt deriving from her experience with EC. The story is a slight affair of hallucinogens and betrayals, but its basis is the authentic Robert E. Howard cynicism and respect for warrior culture, and Gerry Conway never betrays this basis.

SON OF SATAN 1 (From Hell He Came): is the ending of **HOST RIDER 2**, though with contemptuous disregard for continuity. Herb Trimpe's art is quite powerful in a very sketchy way, but the protagonist is weakly characterized, and hell hasn't become more convincing between comics. Marie Severin's colour packs some punch. On the whole, though, it looks like a rush job, and weaving one of its strands into the next issue of another comic doesn't endear it to me. Still, give them time.

SWAMP THING 4 (Monster on the Moors); confirms this as the finest comic now being published. Should I have readers who tut-tut over the presence here of a comics review, I exhort them to sample this. Perhaps it began life as a particularly intelligent attempt to wed the old horror comic to the superhero variety, but it has gone beyond that into a personality all its own. If the dialogue is over-rhetorical ("Just set her down easy, Paul - and pray") it's probabl this and Berni Wrightson's slightly cartoonish style that save it from the deprivations of the Comics Code. In the best horror comic tradition, it begins with a convention (young unconscious couple borne away to manor) and builds. Its counterpoint of grim prose and reticent visuals builds with perfect judgement to its last superb full-page panel, the finest I've seen in a comic this year. Another sympathetic monster, maybe (this comic specializes in them without reducing their horror) but more than suitable for framing.

TOMB OF DRACULA 13 (Death of a Vampire on the cover but only To Kill a Vampire within): is, like its previous issues, the oddest comic around. The idea is ingenious: to play on the ambiguity Dracula has achieved as a character, particularly in the cinema, and to make him not entirely an anti-hero, but quite a heroic protagonist. He's set upon by adversaries wielding wooden knives, darts, arrows. Some perverse notions, such as the black vampire-slayer whose mother was vampirized while bearing him. Some Marvel moralizing: Dracula wanders into a boxing stadium and makes a (justified enough) moral comment. Much of this is comic in the wrong sense, largely because Gene Colan is the wrong artist for horror fantasy (as witness his recent disastrous Haunter of the Dark). Writer Marv Wolfman displays a good deal of ingenuity within the severe restrictions of the concept, and respects a convention of the horror comic, the film reference - in this case a scream-in-the-shadows reminiscence of the Val Lewton Body Snatcher. WEREWOLF BY NIGHT 10 (The Sinister Secret of Sarnak): lacks the conviction of Mike Ploog's art. Tom Sutton's is naive but not convincing. He's good with warty freaks, but unfortunately even his normal characters seem to be oddly proportioned, dummies or on the point of melting - especially when viewed at an angle. Clearly he needs the restraining influence of Syd Shores' realistic inking. Still, there's Gerry Conway's script, and I detect a gleam in his eye when he invents werewolf whistles and a masked pop-record bootlegger who lives in the sewers. However, I'm more dubious about his first-person narrative whose continuity is preserved throughout the transition of lycanthropy. □

REVIEWS: 3 -- MUSIC, (continued from page 19)

motivations, Dark Side of the Moon will undoubtedly be their most commercially successful album yet. Of recent productions, Ummagumma had a rather self-indulgent studio album, though the live album of the double package was superb; Atom Heart Mother was, I think, strictly for the Floyd collector, though also superb; Meddle left much to be desired in inventiveness on side two. The LP under review, however, is within the appreciation of a much wider rock audience, since so much of it is lyrical. Anything a little too esoteric and popularity rapidly decreases: lyrics if anything tend to re-establish even very bizarre music within the appreciation of less imaginative and perceptive audiences. I think with this record the Floyd have not so much advanced as side-stepped - since they may have found it impossible to remain in the Astronomy Domine, Interstellar Overdrive days without a little personal staleness creeping in. One can now ask where do the Floyd go from here? And it is possible we may have to wait a further few months to find out, but, for me, I would hope the "cosmic" isn't totally worn-out ideal - though the idea itself has taken the imagination of other bands recently, especially Hawkwind, who seem to be a group who's outward involvement with the Universe disguises a clamorous and highly visual stage-act that can be enjoyable and disturbing. The Pink Floyd, however, should be able to find new directions, even if the range of cosmic references extends far, if but superficially, to such as Donovan with his latest but one album, Cosmic Wheels; this being one example of numerous species of apparent cosmic-mysticism, a plying for the universe. □

Do Not Disturb

SHORT STORY

BY DAVID LLOYD

In ancient Greece, an ideal widely pursued was called ataraxia, freedom from all violent and disturbing emotions, a passionless indifference that leads ultimately to inner harmony.

ataraxia (ət ə răk'si ə)

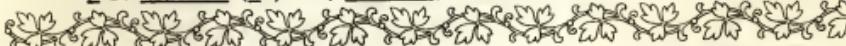
(Gr. ataraxia (a-, not; tarassein, to disturb)

... and when are you going to fix that window? Anyone would think I was asking you to put in a new one. It's only the catch that needs doing, that's all. It's not as if it's a monumental task to fix a catch on a window. Heaven knows, there must be something you can do. Anyone would think you had a weak heart the way you carry on. Other wives' husbands are clever with their hands. Mr. Watkins built a kitchen unit and it's lovely. Lovely. Why can't you do something like that. All you do is spend hours reading. Reading. Reading. Reading. Nothing but books. Why can't you take up carpentry or do a bit of gardening. Heaven knows, that waste-land at the back needs something doing to it. God knows what. I try. Heaven knows, I try. But I've only got two hands and I've got the house to keep up and the shopping and ohh... it's really too much. You don't care. I know you don't care. You're far too wrapped up in books. And what do you read? Greek Philosophy. I ask you. What good is that, eh? What good is that? It's not as if it teaches you anything useful. Just fills up your mind with ridiculous ideas. I know. I know. Philosophy teaches us about life, Hilda. I've heard it all before. What sort of life that's what I'd like to know. Certainly not my sort, that's for sure. What can Pluto and Aristotle tell you that's worth a light nowadays. I bet they were dead wood just like you. They certainly can't have worked very hard for a living if they had the time to write all those bloody words. What? Oh, Pluto, Plato, what's the difference. And that's another thing, you're always correcting me! You really showed me up something terrible the other night. I've got as much right to an opinion as anyone else. Calling me stupid in front of all those people. I know we've been through it before, and we'll go through it a few times more until you realise. I'm your wife. You can't insult me in public. I don't know what Mrs. Watkins thought. I shudder to think. Her husband would never talk to her like that. I'm sick and tired of the way you take me for granted. I didn't have to marry you, you know. Oh no. I could have had my pick. Oh yes. I didn't have to marry you. Come to think of it I don't know why I did. There must have been a reason, I suppose. Mother thought you were clever. He'll go far, she said. He'll go far. Far? Ha! You haven't been promoted in years. Years! We've still got his bloody little house and a bloody little garden and the oldest and noisiest car in the street. When we go out in that I feel ashamed. Mr. and Mrs. Watkins have a lovely car. A lovely car. I bet theirs doesn't give out foul fumes like ours does. The inside of that car reeks - and it's worse when the thing's going. Heaven knows, they must be bad if they made Poopsie ill. The poor little darling was sick all over the floor. And you didn't care. Oh no. The dog's sick again, you said. As cold as ice. You've got no feelings you haven't. No feelings at all. You'll have to take that car to the garage and get it fixed. Ha! I bet they'll laugh when you show them the engine. Nobody could keep a straight face looking at that. The whole thing's a mess. Not even the windscreen wipers work properly... Do you have to smoke that thing in bed? Sitting there staring at the wall. I reckon you ought to be ashamed looking at it too. It hasn't had new wallpaper on it for God-knows-how-long. It's almost time it did, if you ask me. But of course, you're not very good at decorating, are you? You're not very good at anything that needs a bit of physical effort, are you? Oh no. No bloody good at all. Look at you. Sitting there. Meditating, I suppose. Smoking and bloody meditating. And that pipe! It isn't enough you stink the house out all day, you have to bring it to bed with you like a bloody teddy bear. If you burn holes in these sheets you'll

have to buy new ones, you know that don't you? And they cost money, too. We can't afford to throw it away, you know. Audrey's wedding's coming up soon. We'll have to buy her a nice wedding present! A nice tea set or... What? Of course it will. It'll get to Australia all right if you pack it properly. Not like those glasses we sent George in Canada. Oh yes. I know - it was the Post Office. Of course it was. Not you. Oh no. The Post Office. And I suppose the Post Office took out all the packing to make it look as if it was your fault all the glasses got broken. Of course. I know the real reason. I know. You just don't like my brother. You packed those glasses badly deliberately! You're idea of a joke, I suppose. You've got something against George. Heaven knows what it is. You've only met him once. I can't imagine what he's done to deserve such contempt. I'm sure I can't. It's you, that's what it is. It's you. You just don't like anybody in my family. You've got something against them. I don't know what it is. You weren't like this when we were first married. I can't see what's changed you. I really can't. You never say a word from one day to the next. All you do is read. Read and puff away at that disgusting pipe. It doesn't matter about me. You don't care. You just don't care... Oh, I see. Oh yes. Of course, I might have known. You never could stand an argument, could you? As soon as you start losing, you start reading. Back into bloody Pluto, are we? And what does he tell you to do, eh? What does he tell you to do. Oh, look, you've woken Poopsie up now. And she was sleeping so peacefully. If you ask me, it's that terrible smoke that does it. She's got such a sensitive little nose. Now, did you have to move your feet! Her little head was resting right on your ankle. She'll have to get comfortable all over again now. Oh, it's criminal. That smoke!... Here. Let me have that. Thank you. I'll just put it in the ashtray. You can puff away as much as you like tomorrow. Right now, I think we've all had enough of that old pipe. Oh, that's bothered you, hasn't it? It's about time something did. That's it. Make yourself comfortable. Don't worry about poor Poopsie. You nearly kicked her off the bed, then. Haven't you got any heart? You're only concerned with yourself. That's all you think about. Not a thought for anyone else. Hey, I need that pillow! You might be able to sleep with just one, but I certainly can't. I wake up with a headache if I don't get the proper support, you know that. What do you want it for all of a sudden? What do you... Henry...? What... No. Henry! No!... Nnn...

asphyxia (as'fiks'i ə)

[Gr. asphixia (a-, not; phusein, to throb, pulsate)]



ADFA

ADFA is THE AUGUST DERLETH FANTASY AWARD, which this society gives annually to a first publication novel, short story, cinematic production, and horror comic. ADFA is the society because it is the members who vote and decide the winner each year. We like to think our members will take an active interest in the award and send in their votes February next. Full details are to be found in the BFS bulletin. (The November issue contained an interim listing of items eligible). Also, we hope eventually to offer a permanent statuette for the award, which, for an original fantasy statuette means money. Donations towards this are always welcomed, and already a fund does exist, though we are as yet nowhere near the target required. Money should be sent to Dave Sellars, 80 Herne Hill, London SE24.



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